



18th Battalion Association

Windsor and Detroit Branch

MEMORIES

Some time ago, we were watching the Television Program, "No Time for Sergeants". The skit was about a lonesome soldier. It was funny.

The lonesome soldier was no myth. He was real. It all started the night we left London. When we arrived at the train, a big crowd had gathered. Many of the officers and many of the men had plenty of relatives and friends to see them off. There was a lot of hugging, kissing, hand shaking, and many many tearful farewells. The lonesome ones just looked on, sometimes with envy.

When we arrived in West Sandling and were told we were all going to be granted a leave, most of the men in our Platoon talked about going to visit their relatives or friends of their families in different parts of England and Scotland. The lonesome ones just listened. After most of them had gone, one of the signallers came over and suggested we go to London together for a few days. We did and had a nice time. We stayed at the Maple Leaf and each day would visit one of the historical places in the London district. We even went to Madame Tussaud's. We both thought that the gardens at Hampton Court Palace were the nicest we had ever seen.

After dinner we usually went to one of the variety shows in the Picadilly district. We had a lovely time, and when we got back to Sandling, some of those who went to visit their relatives wished they had gone with us. The real lonesome soldier is the one who is wounded. When he says good-bye, usually to his friends who carried him out, he is really on his own. He doesn't know a soul and this condition usually lasts during his stay in hospital. Thousands of Canadian soldiers have had the same experience.

I will always be grateful to the British people for the kindness that was extended to me when, to use an old cliché, I was a stranger in a strange land. They couldn't have been nicer during my hospitalization, and I will never forget it. Every time our Government does something that I think lessens the ties that bind us to Britain and the Monarchy, like taking the Queen's pictures off our bills, I get madder than John Diefenbaker. It doesn't do much good as Prime Minister Trudeau had a larger majority than ever and is still going strong. He just had another date with Funny Girl.